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Governor Bullock Announces Over \$1 Million in Economic Development Grants to Businesses Across Montana for Growth and Expansion

HELENA – Governor Steve Bullock and Montana Department of Commerce Director Meg O’Leary announced the award of \$1.041 million in Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund grants to seven businesses for business growth and expansion plans.

“These grants are a great example of smart and strategic partnerships between the state of Montana and private business to responsibly grow Montana’s economy,” said Gov. Bullock. “From renewable energy to nutritional supplements and advanced manufacturing, the variety of projects funded shows that many Montana industries are growing and thriving.”

The Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund grant program, administered by the Montana Department of Commerce, is designed to create good-paying jobs and promote long-term, stable economic growth in Montana. Businesses can receive grants for projects that create net new jobs in their company and for business development and economic development planning projects.

“These grant funds will support the creation of 139 new jobs in several Montana communities,” said Director O’Leary. “These jobs will be filled by our friends and neighbors, who will in turn contribute to our local economies and generate positive social and economic impacts.”

Grants were awarded for both job creation and planning projects in Lolo, Hamilton, Billings, Manhattan, Big Sky, Bozeman, and Havre (Port of Wild Horse).

Ari Novak, CEO of the Oracle Film Group, who received a grant to conduct a feasibility study on the possibility of opening an animation feature film studio in southwest Montana, noted that “Oracle Film Group is excited by the possibility of being able to move forward with this project that could have such a large impact on our businesses and create so many new opportunities and jobs here in Montana.”

The recipients of Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund grants include:

Category I – Job Creation

- Missoula County received \$547,500 to assist **LGT Sustainable Energy Systems, Inc.** in Lolo. LGT Sustainable Energy Systems, Inc. specializes in sustainable energy systems that capture, generate, and store renewable energy from wind and water. The grant funds will be used for equipment purchases. The resulting business activities will support the creation of 73 new Montana jobs.
- The City of Hamilton received \$240,000 to assist [Applied Training Resources \(ATR\), Inc.](#) in Hamilton. ATR, Inc. provides mission critical procedure, work guidance, and knowledge management solutions to high-risk industries. The grant funds will be used for the purchase of a new building. The resulting business activities will support the creation of 32 new Montana jobs.
- Big Sky Economic Development Corporation received \$170,000 to assist [All American Pharmaceutical & Natural Foods Corporation](#) in Billings. All American Pharmaceutical & Natural Foods Corporation in Billings is a leading manufacturer of dietary, food, and nutritional supplements. The grant funds will be used for equipment purchases. The resulting business activities will support the creation of 34 new Montana jobs.

Category II – Planning

- Prospera Business Network received \$26,250 to assist [Oracle Film Group](#) in Bozeman. Oracle Film Group is a boutique entertainment group specializing in the production of motion picture, commercial, and interactive entertainment. The grant funds will be used for a feasibility study evaluating the possibility of opening an animation feature film studio in southwest Montana.
- Bear Paw Development received \$26,250 to assist **Port of Wild Horse**, the Port of Entry in Havre. The grant funds will go towards a study that would quantify the added economic activity and benefit that Montana and Alberta, Canada would receive should the federal governments of the U.S. and Canada alter the designation of the port as an international port of entry.
- Prospera Business Network received \$4,750 to assist [Montana Maltings](#) in Manhattan. Montana Maltings is a micro malthouse that makes specialty and legacy malts for the brewing, distilling, and food industries. The grants funds will be used for an evaluation to determine the manufacturing facility requirements of a proposed malting facility in Manhattan.
- Prospera Business Network received \$26,250 to assist the [Big Sky Chamber of Commerce](#) in conducting industrial development planning associated with creating two Targeted Economic Development Districts (TEDDs) to serve the community of Big Sky.

Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund grant opportunities are still available. For more information about the program, contact Nancy Faroni, Section Manager, Business Resources Division, at (406) 841-2744 or visit the program website at www.bstf.mt.gov.

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